

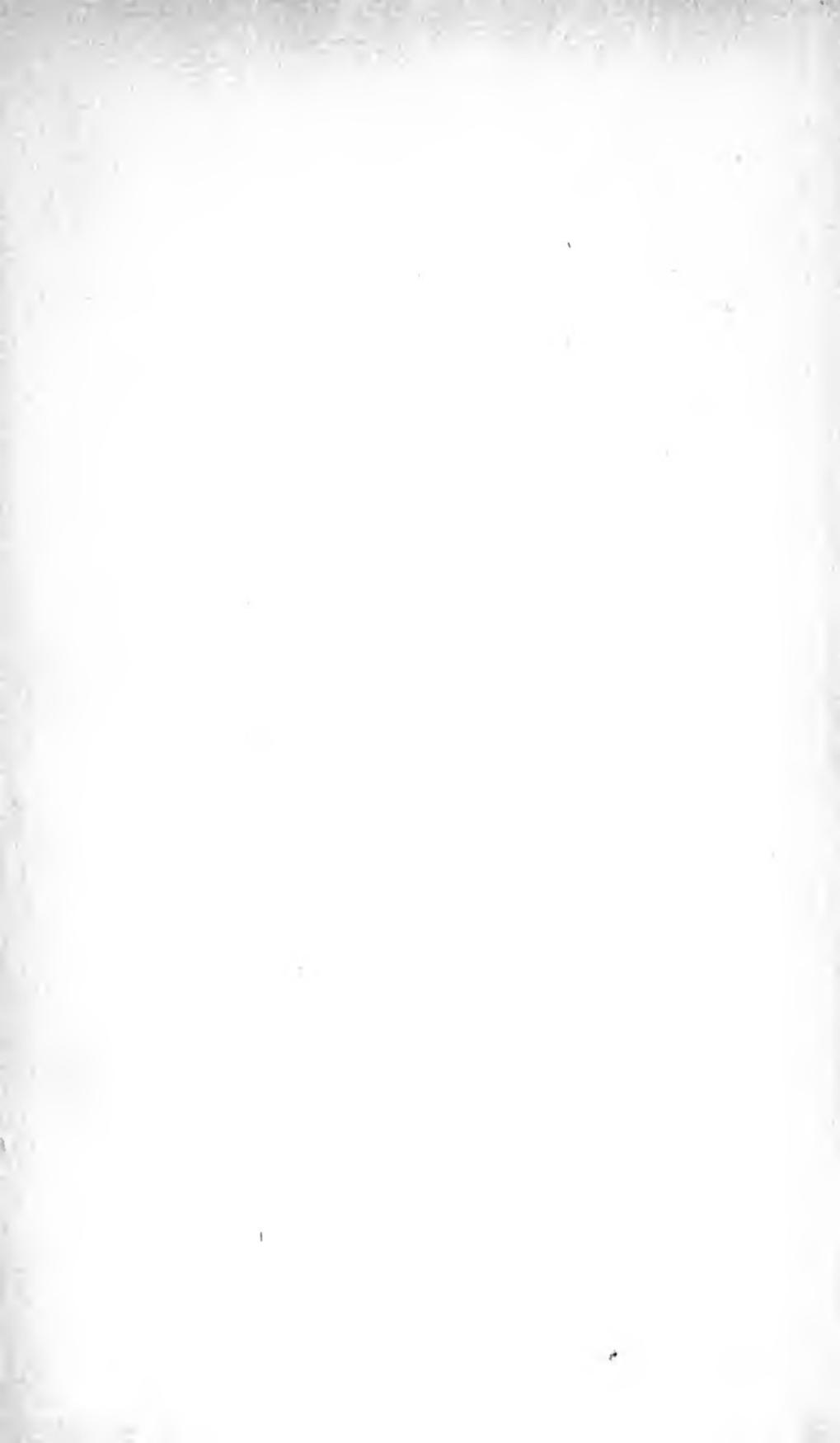
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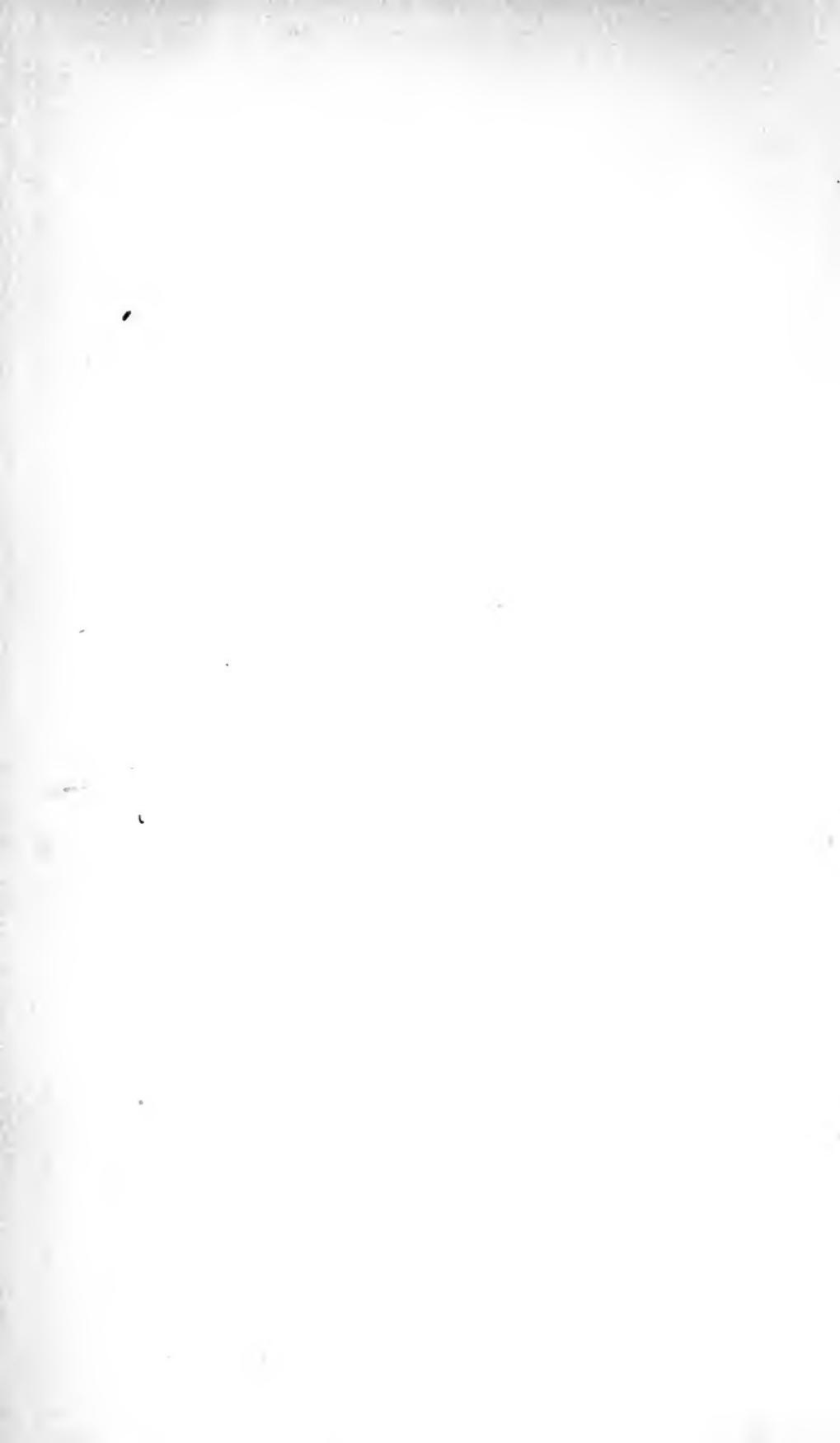


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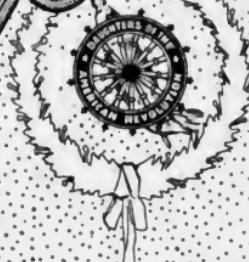


Thomas Wentworth Higginson

# WESTERN RESERVE CHAPTER



DAUGHTERS of  
the AMERICAN  
REVOLUTION



CLYDE - E R OLL - MORTON



# AMERICAN ORATORS AND ORATORY.

Being a report of lectures delivered by  
THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON,  
at Western Reserve University, under the  
auspices of the Western Reserve Chapter  
Daughters of the American Revolution.



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## A Prefatory Note.

In the year 1899, the Western Reserve Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, founded a Lectureship of American History in the College for Women, Western Reserve University, to be filled each year by some eminent historian.

In January, 1900, the Lectureship was auspiciously opened by the late Moses Coit Tyler, of Cornell University. His winning personality and his profound scholarship will always remain a precious memory to those who had the privilege of listening at that time to this distinguished historian.

For the second of this series the Chapter was so fortunate as to secure Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

The enthusiastic reception of these lectures suggested the desirability of issuing them in permanent form for the members.

The Chapter here offers a verbatim report of these lectures, for which it is indebted to Mr. Charles W. Chesnutt.

A special acknowledgment is made to Mr. Charles Orr for his helpful suggestions in the preparation of this book.

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**COLONIAL ORATORY; OR THE  
REIGN OF THE CLERGY**



## Colonial Oratory, or the Reign of the Clergy.



THE following lectures in regard to American orators and oratory are founded in part upon a course of lectures upon that subject which I gave before the Lowell Institute of Boston. Why American orators and American oratory are distinguished from others, to be treated separately, might perhaps be regarded as a matter of quantity at least, if not of quality; for no one can deny that the proportion of oratory furnished from this side of the water has been for at least three centuries greater than that from the other.

An eminent English author who came here a year or two ago, told me that he came under two impressions, both of which were corrected by the facts. He had learned, he said, from Dickens and others, that the two things which every native-born American enjoyed and demanded for his happiness, were, in the first place, the privilege of shaking hands, and, in the second place, the privilege of making a speech. He had

already attended one public dinner, given to one of our most eminent citizens—most eminent at that time, at least—and he was informed that it had been specially stipulated by the subject of the dinner, that he should not be asked to shake hands much, and should not be asked to speak at all. It need hardly be explained to those of tolerably long memories that this distinguished American for whom the dinner was given was Admiral Dewey.

Then, beyond that, so soon as we place side by side the oratory of the original English-speaking man and that of his descendant, the American, we find certain differences in methods which although very poorly studied as yet, and very imperfectly explained, still make the two in some degree, distinct branches of public speaking.

I was asking an English member of Parliament a few years ago about one of the few American-born members of that body, and the only one, I think, who has ever made a speech there, how he was regarded among his fellows.

He said: "He has some great obstacles to overcome. He was educated in England; he took honors at Oxford, was a fellow of Oxford for some time. He might in some respects pass for an Englishman. But he has one fatal defect—he talks too well. Our people don't like that, and they dislike it particularly in Parliament. They don't like to see a man get up and make a speech as though it were the most natural

thing in the world to do; they demand a certain amount of preliminary hesitancy — that is good form for us."

And it is, I think, absolutely true. How far it comes from greater talkativeness in Americans, or from a want of bashfulness; and how far from an awkward kind of bashfulness in the Englishman himself, an undue feeling of pride, a feeling that it is not quite becoming a man to put himself in the way of asking the attention of others to what he says — which of these is the origin of it, I can't say, but I think the difference is very clear.

Daniel Webster, you will find somewhere in his letters, when he first came back from England, was quite astonished, after hearing a subject discussed in Parliament, at hearing it discussed in Congress also, and finding that the question had been settled in about as many hours in Parliament as it took days to settle it in Congress.

The Englishman, as far as I have observed, as a rule gets up with reluctance, and begins with difficulty. Just as you are beginning to feel seriously anxious for him, you gradually discover that he is on the verge of saying some uncommonly good thing. Before you are fully prepared for it he says that good thing, and then to your infinite amazement he sits down!

The American begins with an ease which relieves you of all anxiety. The anxiety begins when he talks a while without making any

special point. He makes his point at last, as good perhaps as the Englishman's, possibly better. But then when he has made it you find that he goes feeling on for some other good point, and he feels and feels so long, that perhaps he sits down at last without having made it.

My ideal of a perfect speech in public would be that it should be conducted by a syndicate or trust, as it were, of the two nations, and that the guaranty should be that an American should be provided to begin every speech and an Englishman provided to end it.

Then, when we go a little farther and consider the act of speech itself, and its relation to the word, we sometimes meet with a doubt that we see expressed occasionally in the daily papers provided for us with twenty pages per diem and thirty-two on Sunday, whether we will need much longer anything but what is called sometimes by clergymen "the printed word"—whether the whole form of communication through oral speech will not diminish or fade away.

It seems to me a truly groundless fear—like wondering whether there will ever be a race with only one arm or one leg, or a race of people who live only by the eye or by the ear. The difference between the written word and the spoken word is the difference between solitude and companionship, between meditation and something so near action that it is at least half-

way to action and creates action. It is perfectly supposable to imagine a whole race of authors of whom not one should ever exchange a word with a human being while his greatest work is being produced.

The greatest work of American literature, artistically speaking, Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," was thus produced. His wife records that during the year that he was writing it, he shut himself up in his study every day. She asked no questions; he volunteered no information. She only knew that something was going on by the knot in his forehead which he carried all that year. At the end of the year he came from his study and read over to her the whole book; a work of genius was added to the world. It was the fruit of solitude.

And sometimes solitude, I regret as an author to say, extends to the perusal of the book, for I have known at least one volume of poems of which not a copy was ever sold; and I know another of which only one copy was sold through my betraying the secret of the author and mentioning the book to a class-mate, who bought that one copy.

Therefore, in a general way, we may say that literature speaks in a manner the voice of solitude. As soon as the spoken word comes in, you have companionship. There can be no speech without at least one person present, if it is only the janitor of the church. Dean Swift in reading

the Church of England service to his man-servant only, adapted the service as follows: "Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth thee and me in sundry places," etc.; but in that very economy of speech he realized the presence of an audience. It takes a speaker and an audience together to make a speech—I can say to you what I could not first have said to myself. "The sea of upturned faces," as Daniel Webster said, borrowing the phrase however from Scott's "Rob Roy"—"the sea of upturned faces makes half the speech." And therefore we may assume that there will always be this form of communication. It has, both for the speaker and for the audience, this one vast advantage.

A brilliant woman once said to me that she had often wondered which taught us the most about any man or any woman—to know every act of their lives, to read every word they had written, or the first glance at their faces. The orator has the advantage of that collective glance, and often the audience has the melancholy advantage of looking at one face and very often wishing that there were more to be seen in it.

Thus I have laid out in a general way the ground and basis of oratory—the communication of man with men. There have been in this country several successive periods of oratory, one of which I am to describe as the Colonial Period—what I might call, in other words, "The Reign of the Clergy."

We get from the Scriptures themselves the origin of the early practice among the Puritans, of having what they called a pastor and a teacher to every church. They had, you will notice, in nearly all the early Puritan churches, that double combination and that double ministry. They were bred on the Old Testament, and easily recalled that strange scene in the Book of Exodus, where the Prophet Moses, endeavoring to get rid of the terrible responsibility demanded of him by the Deity, begs off on the ground that,

"O my Lord, I am not eloquent; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."

And we read there that the Lord was wroth with Moses, and said to him:

"Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people."

So the forces were joined, the pastor and the teacher. And we may truly say that the two great Puritan migrations—the Plymouth and the Salem migrations—both began in eloquence, that they were founded upon eloquent words.

When John Robinson said to the pilgrims, at their last meeting in Europe before the Plymouth colony was launched, "I charge you in the sight of God that ye follow me no farther than as ye see that I follow Christ; there is more light yet to break out of the Word of God," he predicted the whole subsequent development of New England theology. And when the leaders of the

other great New England colony, that of Massachusetts bay, sailed from England, we are told that when they were off Land's End their chosen teacher, Francis Higginson, collected the emigrants around him on the deck and said:

"We will not say, as the Separatists did on leaving England, 'Farewell, Rome! Farewell, Babylon!' But we will say, 'Farewell, dear England! farewell, the Christian Church of England and all the friends there! We go to propagate the positive part of church reformation and to preach the Gospel in America!'"

How could any band of religious emigrants — going forth to their duty on another continent and across an unknown sea, fail to respond in their career to such beginnings of oratory as that?

Accordingly we find that the Puritan oratory, in quantity at least if not in quality, was enough to overpower the most daring modern mind. Holy Master Cotton, minister of Boston, came out from England with two clergymen — elders they would have been called — to accompany him, and they preached a sermon apiece on every one of the forty days of the voyage. After every meal they had a sermon. The sermon if it had been on land would have been an hour long at least; and on the ocean, where there was nothing else to do, it may have stretched into a second hour.

When Samuel Sewall, afterwards best known as Judge Sewall — we know that he was in-

tended for the church, as every learned man was in those days—when Samuel Sewall preached his first sermon to a new parish he was too shy to look at the hour-glass, and preached for two hours and a half before the sermon was done. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that he never was settled over any parish and did not remain long in the ministry.

The vast extent, the vast elaboration of all religious services in those days is the first thing that impresses us. Let us paint for ourselves a picture of a Sunday service among the Puritans.

The sun shines down brightly, we will suppose, over a little forest settlement, more and more cleared every year, so as to carry the wolves and bears and Indians into the yet remoter distance, yet not so far off but that two stout gates at either end of the village serve as protection, and no one is allowed to live more than half a mile from the meeting-house.

There has been no stroke of work done in the village since three o'clock yesterday afternoon. Last night a preparatory lecture was held, and now comes the consummation of all in the solemn weekly service. We will not decide where this little settlement was. If it was Cambridge village, a drum has been beating for the last half hour to call the people



together; and if Salem village, a bell has been ringing and a red flag hung out from the church like an auction flag—goods without money and without price within. Or, if it is old Haverhill village, Abraham Hayward has been blowing his horn for half an hour (a service for which Abraham receives half a pound of pork annually from each family in town).

Let us draw nearer. Here are the outposts of the church, as it were—the stocks, the whipping-post, a wooden cage where offenders may be confined. And there, beyond it, stands the church itself, a humble building as yet, possibly of brick, more likely of wood, with a heavy stack of chimneys and a bell-rope hanging down in the center of the church—like that you still see in the old church at Hingham—to be sounded from within. You see six or eight windows with small panes of glass or oiled paper, and between the windows are nailed the heads of all the wolves that have been killed in the town that year; but the Quakers think that some of the wolves have cheated them and got inside in sheep's clothing.

At the entrance to the enclosure surrounding the church, stands a sentinel in armor painted black, carrying a match-lock musket in his hand. He is girded with his bandoleer, supporting his sword and a dozen tin cartridge boxes. The governor has just passed by, with his four



attendants carrying halberds before him — a combination of lance and axe which you may still see carried before dignitaries in Scotland.

Then comes the clergyman led by the sexton, who doffs his broad-brimmed hat for the purpose. The minister wears a black skull-cap, a black Geneva cloak, and his black gloves open at the finger and thumb to handle his manuscript the better — a practice which still lingered in my childhood and perhaps does now. He ascends the pulpit, the boys on the stairs being moved aside to make way for him. He faces his congregation, a few hundred people, "seated," as it is called by the authorities, once a year. They take their places in the order of their social position — the magistrates and their wives, the other elders and their wives, and so on down to the humblest position in the town; and in the corner of each pew there is a large wooden cage to hold the smallest child in the family.

These people are dressed now for Sunday, sometimes in garments thought so showy that the clergymen preach against them.

The young men have great ruffs, they have gold and silver buttons, they have curious knots at the knees, and great picturesque boots outside. The young girls who sit beside them wear silk or tiffany hoods. They wear embroidered caps, immoderate



great ruffs around their necks, mysterious things called slashed apparel and cut-work, which are often preached against. "Such pride," one clergyman says, "as it might bring down the wrath of the Lord on every church in the country." And all the boys in town are carefully collected on the pulpit stairs and the gallery stairs, with a sufficient number of tithing men detailed to take charge of them.

Then comes the period of service. Four psalms are to be sung during the morning service, ten tunes being the whole range known in the colony. There is prayer, and then in due time comes the sermon. It may be an especial sermon. It may be provided for some particular case; for some funeral, for instance, because they have no prayers at funerals; or for some wedding, since weddings are private.

Benjamin Calf of Newbury writes, in one of his quaint poems, of a certain clergyman:

" On Sabbath day  
He went his way,  
As he was used to do,  
God's house unto  
That he may know  
What he had for to show.

" God's holy will  
He must fulfill,  
For it was his desire  
There to declare  
A sermon rare  
Concerning Madam Fryer."

So Madam Fryer had her funeral sermon.

Or, if we are fortunate, the sermon may be one of those which emerge like flowers in the midst of those dry old volumes of Puritan sermons, volumes now hardly readable by mortal men, yet sometimes having titles that will touch your heart. It may be that we are to hear Increase Mather's sermon on "The Morning Star," or on "The Voice of God in Stormy Winds," or his more formidable sermon called "Burnings Bewailed," in which he gives his theory of the great fire that took place in Boston the other day. He attributes that circumstance, not to any trivial accident of the elements, but it is clear to his mind what one cause is responsible for it. He attributes it partly to Sabbath-breaking, and partly to monstrous periwigs.

"Monstrous periwigs," he says, "such as are worn by some church-members, which resemble the locusts that came out of the bottomless pit. Rev. 9: 2, 3."

These same periwigs are called by an eminent divine, "Horrid bushes of vanity, which can find no countenance either in the light of nature or in express Scripture. I. Cor. 14: 8."

That was the way in which, in those formidable sermons, they clinched and hammered down each doctrine by a bit of actual Scripture text driven through it to hold it there forever. And I do not doubt that, as one may still see in Scotland, the hearers all had their Bibles with them, and when-

ever a text was announced, turned over the pages rapidly to identify it and make sure that the clergyman had not cheated them with the wrong verse.

Or, it may be that the sermon we are to hear is that yet more formidable discourse by Cotton Mather, the son, called "*Brontologia Sacra*," a sermon on thunderstorms, written during a period of such occurrences, and delivered, as it happened, directly in the midst of one. It is divided into seven separate chapters, or bolts, with plenty of sharp lightning mingled in from the Bible and from the Hebrew Fathers.

Just as Mather says, "In thunder there is the voice of Almighty God," a messenger comes rushing into the church, like the man in the book of Job, to tell him that his own house has just been struck, and that, though no one is killed the house has been filled with the lightning and the furniture damaged; which Mather takes as composedly as any scientific lecturer in his laboratory would take an unexpected explosion of gas—it vindicates the power of the article. And so Mather takes it and says, with a bit of superb and evidently spontaneous eloquence, that he wishes his hearers might be like that magnet which once in his house, during a thunderstorm, was turned instantaneously from north to south, and he wishes that the next bolt may turn their stubborn souls from Satan to God. But afterwards he has to admit that Satan is allowed to have a

hand in thunderstorms also, and points out the fact — which is often referred to in Sewall's diary, for instance, and a popular impression in those days — that for some reason or other churches and ministers' houses were peculiarly vulnerable to the electric fluid.

Suppose the sermon, be it an hour or two hours long, to be finished. It has been the pomp and circumstance of glorious preaching. The congregation probably stirs with that slight expression of ultimate relief which the most eloquent sermons, perhaps even ordinary lectures produce when they are at last ended. If there have been any slumbering eyes under the silk or tiffany hoods, they are delicately touched by the wand of the tithing man, with the soft end of the wand, which is the tail of a rabbit; while if little boys have been similarly weak, the other end, which has the rabbit's hoof upon it, taps the boy's forehead less gently.

They have not reached that fine point of discrimination which Henry Ward Beecher announced for the benefit of clergymen when he was at a country convocation of ministers. It was in the height of summer, and they all compared notes on the terrible problem of keeping the farmers in their congregations awake during the afternoon service. Finally they appealed to Mr. Beecher — of all men, one would suppose, the least subject to that experience. He said they were not perhaps very much troubled

with it in Plymouth Church, but they had one unfailing method to remove the evil.

"The sexton," he said, "is placed at a certain point on the gallery stairway from which he can command every face in the church. He keeps watch during the sermon, and his instructions are if he sees a single person going to sleep, he is to go directly up into the pulpit and wake up the minister." Thus another age often brings into operation, by higher instrumentalities, what the most skilful mechanism of other days could not. In Puritan days they hadn't got beyond the tithing rod with a rabbit's hoof at one end and his tail at the other.

Now comes the expected moment—the varying lottery of divine service. The thing you cannot foresee, the *Sunday Herald*, as it were, of the Puritan world is to be unfolded. First, perhaps, some new law made by the legislature is to be read and listened to reverently. Then perhaps some elder exercises on a text of Scripture—pretty severe exercise it sometimes proves for a day of rest; and then perhaps some offending man, possibly a magistrate or an elder, comes before the audience and with a foul linen cap drawn down over his eyes makes acknowledg-



ment to the congregation for some sin of which he has been convicted.

Then there is more singing, more praying, and the occasion is not omitted to say, "Brethren, now there is time for contribution; therefore he who has, let him freely give." And the people, instead of sitting idly in their pews and looking surprised that they have left their purses at home when the contribution box is handed around, the people themselves have to come up and put in their contributions before the elders and in the sight of the world. Then the service is dismissed, the people scatter. The women who have ridden in from outside and dismounted on the big horse block, remount their horses and ride away; only that a few, who have come from still greater distances, remain and take their dinner of cold pork and beans in the meeting-house.

There is the Sunday service, there is the day, there is the life of those stern, simple, self-devoted people. They may sometimes criticise the sermon; let them beware how they do it! I read with pain that an ancestor of mine in the old Salem church called forth from an irreverent parishioner the remark that he preached lies, and that his doctrine was the doctrine of devils;—and the fact that his name was Thomas Maule, and that he was 'mauled' to the extent of ten stripes for saying so, is no satisfaction to that clergyman's posterity.

Yet we know that behind all this power, all

this enormous deference, there still remains a curious kind of democratic relation. Clergymen were not called clergymen, they were called elders. They were not appointed by any bishop; they were chosen by the congregation, and the congregation could, if they fell from grace, displace them and did so. And yet, on the other hand, society was so organized that the power of these same clergymen was almost terrific.

The franchise, for instance, was at first given to church-members only. But it was the clergyman who decided who should be church-members, so that the clergy virtually cast every ballot that was cast at the elections. Cotton Mather said:

“ New England being a settlement bound up in religious considerations, the clergy ought to interest themselves in politics.” It is curious in how many denominations the tendency now is toward the other view of the subject. And when, in the election of 1673 or thereabouts the pious John Wilson, wishing to promote the election of his favorite candidate for governor, ascended a tree on Cambridge common and preached from the branches, he reached a point which even the most skilful manager of city politics has hardly proposed to imitate in that city.

Those men had a power which we shrink from, and yet which they carried out with an almost touching simplicity and self-confidence. They

were more than themselves, they were the representatives of God. They spoke for the eternal needs of the people, for the principles of the New England government; and we cannot deny that oratory existed in them when we think that it was by their words alone, although thus lavishly displayed, that they ruled those young settlements and brought them forward to the day when the rule could pass into other hands. We know that in the worst things done in those days — the treatment of the Quakers, of the Indians, of the witches — we know that good as well as evil came from the rule of the Puritan clergy. When the brave Miantonomoh, for suspected treason, was tried before the legal authorities and they could find no charge against him they turned him over to the elders. The elders decided that he must be put to death, and the chief, Uncas, was delegated to slay him in cold blood, and did so.

King Philip — a patriot according to his own light, at least in a time when it was not considered a want of patriotism for a man to fight for the freedom of his own country against a stronger one — King Philip was pursued through settlement after settlement, and when he was at last entrapped and killed, the four quarters of his body were cut apart and sent to be exhibited in different towns of New England; his head was set up and remained for years in the peaceful town of Plymouth, and the clergy boasted that they had prayed the bullet into Philip's heart.

That side of it looks rather dark. But on the other hand we remember that at a later time, when the different colonies had become more or less united and the council of the united colonies had voted to prosecute an Indian war, the Massachusetts clergy, satisfying themselves that the war was unjust, caused the Massachusetts contingent to be recalled after it was already on its way to the field; and they came back and took no part in the contest. There again the clergy reached what is very nearly the highest point of unselfish patriotism—to stand with a minority against what they think an unjust war. The clergy, whom we think of as fierce and formidable among the Puritans, were, in reality, even in those days, fathers of their people. They were kindly, they were sympathetic, when you once got behind this veil of austerity.

Nothing ever made the position of the Puritan clergy quite human or quite intelligible to me, until I read that story of holy Master Wilson, the man who stood by Mary Dyer's scaffold, not to protect her, but to make a pious ballad on her execution after it was over. Master Wilson, a terror to evil-doers, was once at some great public gathering, and somebody said to him,

"Sir, I will tell you a good thing. Here is a mighty assemblage of people, and there is not one of them all but loves Mr. Wilson."

"I will tell you a better thing," replied the old man. "Here is a mighty body of people, and

there is not one of them all but Mr. Wilson loves him."

You cannot make that combine with your merely theocratic, conventional view of the Puritan clergy.

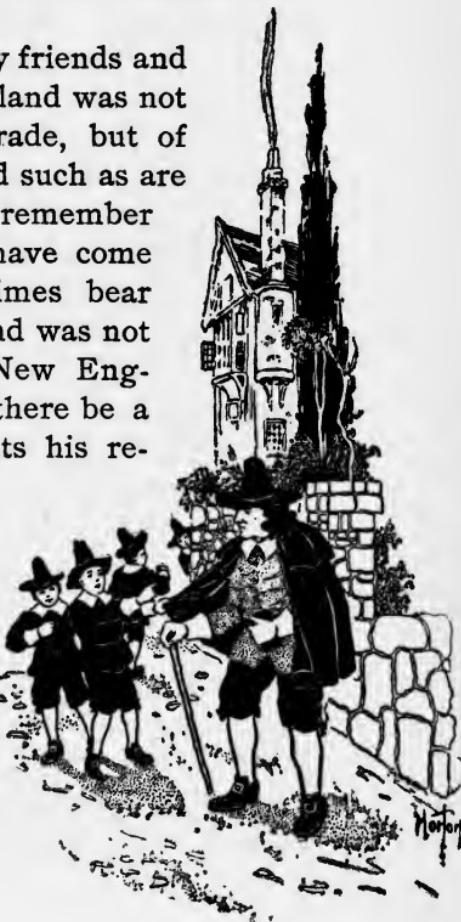
I remember also what content it gave me as a boy when I first read the story of holy Master Cotton, another Boston clergyman, one of the best of them—the one who was called the universal scholar, the walking library, who loved to sweeten his mouth with a piece of John Calvin before he went to sleep, he said. One day as the old man, grown rather feeble and rather deaf, was walking the streets of Boston some street boys saw him. It was a new idea to me that there could be any street boys in the Puritan time; I supposed they were street little old men. I knew there were boys but I did not know exactly where they were kept, but it never occurred to me that they could be allowed to be in the streets at all. Some street boys came along, and one of them said: "Let's put a trick upon old Cotton." And you can fancy the old man walking along in his Geneva cloak and his cocked hat, and his cane patting the ground as he went meditating on the nineteenthly or the twentiethly of his next Sunday's sermon; and you can imagine those boys combining to see what trick they would dare to put upon him; and you can imagine them consulting together and pushing one another up to it: "You do it!" "No, no!

you do it." "No, you do it!" And finally perhaps the one who proposed it slinking off into the background, as is usually the case, and some little fellow who has been put up to it by the others runs up behind him and twitches his cloak and says, "Cotton, thou art an old fool!" Now, what does the Reverend Mr. Cotton do? Does he call for the tithing man and have those boys sent to jail or to the whipping-post? Not a bit of it! There is human nature in the old man; and so, as he trudges along, he suddenly turns round upon them just in time to see their heels disappearing round the next corner, probably. "I know it," says the old man, "I know it. The Lord make both me and thee wiser!" And then he goes on around the corner, chuckling over the thought of how he has outwitted those boys.

We are to look at the eloquence of the Puritan clergy as that of men filled with what they deemed a divine mission, filled with a mixture of theology now outworn and not now preached in any pulpit in its fullness as they preached it. We can fancy them with their limitations and their purposes, their doubts perhaps, for they expressed freely their desires, their sorrows, and yet having, in their simple lives, such a career as we know. There was no luxury for them. They were not very amply paid. That ancestor of mine of whom it is said that he preached lies and his doctrine was the doctrine

of devils, had about the highest salary I have found recorded in the colonies. He had one hundred and sixty pounds a year in "country produce," with a discount of twenty pounds if paid in solid cash, "solid cash" meaning black and white wampum beads and bullets, value one farthing. But when we see what they did, I think we shall see that they earned their salaries. That very ancestor of mine, in an election sermon, said once:

"You are to remember, my friends and brethren, that our New England was not originally a plantation of trade, but of religion. Let merchants and such as are making their cent per cent. remember this. Let all others that have come among us since at sundry times bear this in mind, that worldly end was not the aim of the planting of New England, but religion. And if there be a man among you who counts his religion but as twelve, and the whole world as thirteen, let such a one remember that he has neither the spirit of a true New England man, nor yet of a sincere Christian."





**REVOLUTIONARY ORATORY, OR  
THE RISE OF THE LAWYERS**





## Revolutionary Oratory, or the Rise of the Lawyers.

**A**T the end of my last lecture I left New England wholesomely but uncomfortably under the absolute control of the Puritan clergy; and the part of the subject I have to present now is to me peculiarly interesting, because it has never been, so far as I know, fairly or fully discussed — the extraordinary effect produced by the events of the next hundred years in transferring that control from the clergy to another class, the lawyers, who were for many years to exercise it in their turn.

It is very interesting to see how, out of the early system of our colleges, the older colleges in the eastern colonies, colleges which existed practically for the education of the clergy, there came in time the training in other directions which was to enlarge and simplify the position of affairs in the community as a whole.

If you look at the old catalogues — the triennial and quinquennial catalogues of Harvard and Yale, where all the clergy have their names placed in italics, you will see that for a hundred years those colleges existed essentially to train clergymen

and that everything else was secondary. Those who organized them did not foresee that out of that training of the clergy was to come the gradual development of other studies not specially belonging to the clergy, from our point of view, but studies which were urged on them from necessity as a part of their duty, and which ultimately resulted in detaching themselves and producing special classes in other directions.

Professor Goodale of Harvard University has shown very clearly, for instance, how the whole department of medicine came up at first as a collateral affair in those colleges, produced from necessity in the training of the clergy. Why? Because the clergy were the physicians of their parishes. Thence the whole *materia medica* gradually established itself in successive departments of study, in order that the clergy might learn how to be good doctors. And in just the same way, out of the extraordinary fact that the clergy were practically the lawyers of the people, there came ultimately a separate race of lawyers.

In the diaries of that strange old man, a most picturesque and interesting character of the Puritan period, of whom I have spoken, Chief Justice Sewall, you find the most singular exhibition of the life of a man who might either be regarded as something of a clergyman veneered over with a little law, or something of a lawyer veneered over with a good deal of clergy.

He was Chief Justice of Massachusetts. He

was the man of whom I told you that at his first sermon he forgot his hour-glass and preached two hours and a half, and was not much encouraged to preach any more. But there was nothing in that, to prevent him from being a good lawyer, it seems, and he was placed at the head of the law department in the Massachusetts colony.

And how did he occupy himself while listening to long debates, or apparently discussing with his companions great legal problems? Why, he busied himself in writing out little Scripture texts and handing them round for the nurture and admonition of the other judges, who were also clergymen veneered with a little law. Or he wrote little poems of a pious description suggested by the lawsuit that was going on, or perhaps suggested by something that had recently happened,—having just attended a funeral, for instance, and recalling a certain similarity in the names of the bearers, he wrote them out in this couplet:

“ Two Sams, two Johns and one good Tom  
Bore prudent Mary to the tomb.”

And thus the widow Coney was dismissed.

And all through Judge Sewall’s life that same combination existed. In command of a military company occasionally, when the captain was out of the way he offered the prayers when the military training began. He in all ways, even to the process of making love to three successive widows, brought to bear the same

theological interest and was ready with his Scripture texts or his little poems; only for the advantage of the widows, each was commonly employed to wrap up a little piece of sugar candy, which was a new-found delicacy in those days, and answered in the process of love-making to widows the purpose of ice-cream soda to the women of the present day.

This was the chief justice of the colony. And when you ask who the lawyers were, the answer is that there were no established lawyers, no established and recognized attorneys until the year 1701, and that there was no examination or preparation required among those for many years after.

An English lawyer of some learning, a Lincoln's Inn man, came out to establish himself in Boston. He argued one case, and argued it in such a thoroughly unecclesiastical manner that he was never allowed to argue another, but retired to a small market garden in Brookline where he complained that he had neither a house to live in nor a garden to cultivate.

Of the recognized attorneys one quite distinguished was a tailor, another was an apothecary—and so on, there is that absence of all rigor in the administration of justice. After the examinations began in Massachusetts the first eminent lawyer was Benjamin Gridley, in 1730, often called the father of the Boston bar. The clergy, not content with acting as judges, or arguing cases if neces-

sary — for they were always welcome as attorneys — would boldly go into lawsuits in progress, observe what was going on, and if they were not pleased with the judge's decision would overrule it. If they did not like the examination of the witnesses they would examine them themselves; if they did not like the action of the jury they would overrule it and pronounce the verdict themselves.

It was all a curious travesty of legal technicalities, and one can hardly be surprised that upon one occasion one of these attorneys when a witness having arrived late — an old woman — and the court-house was crowded, pointed out to her the seats where the judges sat and the stairway that led up to them and told her to go up there and seat herself among the judges. And when called to account he said that he had always been told that that was the place where the old women sat.

Now, what made the possibility of any change in all this condition of affairs? The change came from two or three things. In a general way it came from the expansion of thought, and from the expansion of settlements also. It was not possible, in the nature of things, that the rigor of the Puritan theology should last forever; and it did not. A greater variety of people came as settlers, with different opinions, a greater variety of saints, and a tolerable variety of sinners.

There were clergymen who, though firm in their own convictions, had no absolute faith in the Westminster catechism; and outside of that there were many persons in whom, as time went on, a sense of humor began to develop, and who were unable to see this strange Puritan life as seriously as at first. There were the Episcopal clergy, for instance, to deal with, who were very apt to be loyalists, very apt to be educated men, and sometimes men who would have their jokes at the Puritan proprieties. The Reverend Matthew Byles, a loyalist clergyman at Boston, at the end of the first hour on his sermon would pay deference to the habits of the community by having his hour-glass at his side and turning it over; but, he would remark incidentally, "Now, my hearers, let us take another glass." It was an innocent *bon mot* in its place but perhaps somewhat secular.

Then there was the class of professional scoundrels who developed themselves — the picturesque villains of that early period. There was Stephen Burroughs, whose life has gone through perhaps twenty editions after long intervals of time, and who will perhaps live forever as a curious exhibition of the rogue side of life in the Puritan period. Stephen Burroughs went through the country defrauding people and very commonly wearing the garments of a clergyman, always ready to preach or pray in either sense of the word. On one occasion, when pursued for a

theft, he took refuge in a haymow. They caught him at last, and when he pleaded his clerical character as an excuse they said that if he was a clergyman he must preach a sermon from the haymow and let them select the text. He assented, and they selected as the text: "Old shoes and clouted on their feet" He preached a sermon from that text and they let him off.

Those things began to give a little background of something else to this habitual Puritan consciousness. And then there gradually came up, even in families, and even in exceptional households, a little levity of spirit, a little habit of taking things somewhat differently from the old way in which they were taken.

Among the Puritan clergy, who generally—unlike many of their successors—had large families of daughters, and whose daughters—unlike many of those of their successors—were generally all married, sometimes several times over, there was often a great deal of marrying to be done in their own households. And it was etiquette to let the bride select the text for her own wedding sermon.

So when Parson Cranch, of Milton, was to officiate in that way for his eldest daughter, Mary, she cast down her eyes and blushed, we may suppose, when called upon to make the selection, and chose for her text: "Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her." And it was not taken away.

But when her younger sister, named Abby, wished to marry young Squire Adams, christened John, and he being in various questionable practices — among others, beginning to be an attorney — when he was objected to by the father, was not well received by the family, was never even invited to stay to dinner, she selected for her text: "John came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say he hath a devil." And yet Abby lived to be wife of the first President Adams, and the ancestress of indefinite generations of Adamses. You will find her letters also among the spiciest products of the later Puritan period.

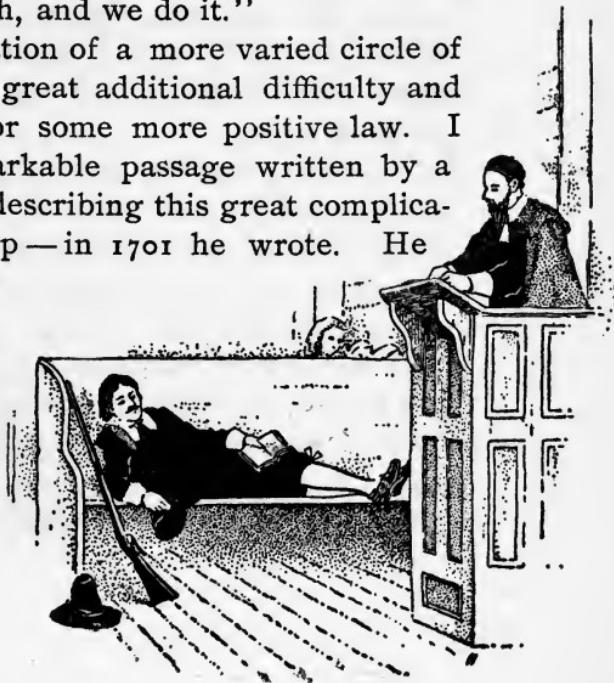
Now all these things tended to relax and modify that severe and strict rule of life with which the Puritan colonies began. And then again, from another source there came up a series of differences. The colonies increased, and so the business of the colonies increased. Men went from one colony to another to conduct lawsuits. There was no general system of laws. Before a general system of laws had been formed there was great trouble. Even in New England there was, after a while, a fringe of outlying colonies where the ancient reverence did not exist. There was sent, on one occasion, down to the settlements on the coast of New Hampshire and Maine — fishing colonies, fishing settlements being there — a young clergyman of the straitest description; and he was preaching at one of these

fishing settlements, and he said to them that they must approve themselves religious, because, he said, "That is the end and aim of your coming hither."

Whereupon one young fisherman raised his head from the bench where he was lying — because in those days, as at the Isle of Shoals within my memory, the fishermen whenever they went to church, all insisted in lying full-length on the pews, as though they were on the thwarts of a vessel, or lying on the rocks; your fisherman anywhere likes to take his Gospel in a horizontal position. When the young clergyman had made this statement, as I have said, one young fellow raised himself up and said:

"The elder is mistaken. He thinks he is speaking to the people of the Bay. Our chief aim here is to catch fish, and we do it."

Now that formation of a more varied circle of elements created great additional difficulty and made a demand for some more positive law. I have here a remarkable passage written by a young Virginian, describing this great complication that came up — in 1701 he wrote. He describes the extraordinary state of chaos in which the colonies were as regards their relations, not merely with the



rest of the world but with one another. He says:

"It is a great unhappiness that no one can tell what is law and what is not in the plantations. Some hold that the law of England is chiefly to be respected, and where that is deficient the laws of the several colonies are to take place. Others are of opinion that the laws of the colonies are to take the first place, and that the law of England is of force only where they are silent. Others there are who contend for the laws of the colonies in conjunction with those that were in force in England at the first settlement of the colony, and lay down that, as the measure of our obedience, alleging that we are not bound to observe any late acts of parliament in England except such only where the reason of the law is the same here that it is in England."

You see how complicated he makes it. It is as bad as questions of imperialism, as bad as knowing what is law in the Philippines. And he goes on:

"But this leaving too great a latitude to the judge, some others hold, that no late acts of parliament of England do bind the plantations but those only wherein the plantations are particularly named. Thus are we left in the dark in one of the most considerable points of our rights; and the case being so doubtful, we are too often obliged to depend upon the crooked cord of a judge's discretion in matters of the greatest moment and value."

This passage may be found in Frothingham's "Rise of the Republic," page 109. It is the best statement that I know, of the state of chaos into which they were thrown. As a result there came to be needed a new race of men specially trained, men who for that purpose should come to the front and meet some of these perplexities which the clergy could not. Then all the dawning anxieties of the revolution came, all the preliminary stages dating back long before the actual declaration; and it needed men who were trained to deal with these, men who had some other training than the ecclesiastical training of Samuel Sewall and his kindred, or the training of the tailors and the apothecaries who were accustomed to argue cases in the city courts.

On the other hand, in training this body of men they had to deal with a great prejudice. The law was not considered, as I told you, a reputable profession, at least not as compared with the clerical profession. It is a singular fact that the three leaders of the revolution, in the Massachusetts colony, John Adams, Sam Adams, and Oxenbridge Thatcher, were all trained originally to be clergymen, and all afterwards determined to be lawyers, and get their legal training in addition. John Adams did it; Oxenbridge Thatcher did it. Sam Adams's parents held so hard to the doctrine that the law was a disreputable profession that they never allowed him to enter it. He went into business, but

before he got through, mixed himself up with legal questions more than the two others put together. And what is more, and what has only lately been brought out distinctly, partly by the researches of my relative, Professor Channing of Harvard, there existed in the southern colonies represented by Virginia very much the same feeling, only coming from a different source.

It was not a question of church membership or of ecclesiastical training—the southern colonies never troubled themselves very much about those things—but turned upon a wholly different thing. The southern colonies were based on land ownership; the aim was to build up a type of society like the English type, an aristocratic system of land-owners as in England. And these miscellaneous men who, without owning large estates or large numbers of slaves, came forward to try cases in court, were regarded with the same sort of suspicion which the same class had to meet in Massachusetts.

Patrick Henry, the greatest of Virginians for the purpose for which Providence had marked him out, was always regarded by Jefferson in very much the same light in which Sam Adams was by his uncles, who were afraid he wanted to be a lawyer. Henry was regarded as a man from the people, an irregularly trained man. Jefferson, you will find, criticises his pronuncia-

tion severely. He talked about "yearth" instead of "earth." He said that a man's "nateral" parts needed to be improved by "edication." Jefferson had traveled in Europe and talked with cultivated men in other countries. He did not do that sort of thing, and he, not being a man of the most generous or candid nature, always tries to make us think that Patrick Henry was a nobody who had very little practice. And it was not until the admirable life of him written for the "American Statesmen" series by my predecessor in this lectureship, Moses Coit Tyler, whose loss we so greatly mourn, that it was clearly made out that, on the contrary, he had an immense legal practice and was wonderfully successful in a great variety of cases.

So, both North and South, there was this antagonism to this new class coming forward; and yet that new class stepped forward and took the leadership of the American Revolution. Not that the clergy were false to their duty. They did their duty well. There is a volume—I know what good libraries you have in Cleveland, to say nothing of the University, and therefore I mention special books more freely—there is a book by J. Wingate Thornton called "The Clergy of the American Revolution," which contains an admirable and powerful series of sermons by those very clergymen whom I have criticized for their limitations. They did their part admirably, and yet one sees as time goes on that the

lawyers are taking matters into their own hands.

But the change was not always a benefit to the style of oratory. It was a period of somewhat formal style; it was not a period when the English language was reaching to its highest sources. You will be surprised to find, for instance, in the books and addresses of that period how little Shakspeare is quoted, how much oftener much inferior poets. In Edmund Burke's orations he quotes Shakspeare very little; and Edmund Burke's orations are interesting especially for this, that they are not probably the original addresses which he gave, are literature rather than oratory, and are now generally supposed to have been written out afterwards. What we know is that they did not hold their audiences. Edmund Burke was known in parliament as the "dinner-bell," because as soon as he got up to speak the hungry Englishmen got up and went out to take their dinners. Goldsmith said of him:

"Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,  
That you scarcely can praise it or blame it too much;  
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing while they thought of dining."

You know Englishmen take their dinner in the midst of the parliamentary sittings, and often parliament does not adjourn at all so long as there is a member left who is not hungry.

Like Burke most of the orators of that

period have a certain formal style. When all is said and done, the clergy got a certain pithiness from that terrific habit they had of going back every little while and pinning down their thought with a text. One English clergyman of the period compared his text to a horse-block on which he ascended when he wished to mount his horse, and then he rode his horse as long as he wished and might or might not come back to that horse-block again. Therefore we see in the oratory of that time a certain formality.

Moreover, in the absence of the modern reporter, we really do not know exactly what was said in the greatest speeches of that day. The modern reporter, whose aim is to report everything that is said, and who generally succeeds (I hope it will not be so in this particular case) in putting in a great many fine things which haven't occurred to the orators—the modern reporter was not known, and we have but very few descriptions even of the great orations. One of these, fortunately, we have from a very able source—John Adams. He describes to us the address of James Otis on what was called "writs of assistance," which was merely an old-fashioned form of search warrant. It was seventeen years before the revolution broke out; and in his old age he gave a description of it, done in a spirit of generosity and freedom which does not belong always to his earlier days. He says, writing in the year 1817, and looking back more than half a century:

"Whenever you shall find a painter, male or female, I pray you to suggest a scene and subject." That is not, by the way, putting it very near, because you may remember perhaps that John Adams said once that there were no painters or sculptors in America and he hoped there never would be; but he has got so far in his old age as to imagine what a painter might do, and he says:

"The scene is in the council chamber of the old town house in Boston. The date is the month of February, 1761. That council chamber was as remarkable an apartment and more so, than the house of lords or house of parliament in Great Britain, or that in Philadelphia in which the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. In this chamber, near the fire, were seated five judges with Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson at their head as chief justice, all in their new fresh robes of scarlet English cloth, in their broad bands and immense judicial wigs. In this chamber were seated, at a long table, all the barristers of Boston and its neighboring county of Middlesex, in their gowns, bands and tie-wigs. They were not seated on ivory chairs, but their dress was more solemn and more pompous than that of the Roman senate when the Gauls broke in upon them. In a corner of the room must be placed" — I ask your special attention to this sentence — "In a corner of the room must be placed wit, sense, imagination,

genius, pathos, reason, prudence, eloquence, learning, science, and immense reading, hung by the shoulders on two crutches, covered with a cloth greatcoat, in the person of Mr. Pratt,"—Mr. Pratt was the great lawyer of Boston in that day—"who had been solicited on both sides but would engage on neither, being about to leave Boston forever as Chief Justice of New York. Two portraits, at more than full-length, of King Charles II. and King James II. were hung on the most conspicuous side of the apartment. If my young eyes or old memory hath not deceived me, these were the finest pictures I have seen. The colors of their long flowing robes and their royal ermine were almost glowing, the figures the most noble and graceful, the features most distinct and characteristic; far superior to those of the king and queen of France in the senate chamber of congress. I believe they were Van Dyck's." Those pictures have long since disappeared; no one knows exactly what became of them. They were probably sent back to England at the time of the revolution.

"Now for the actors and performers. Otis was a flame of fire; with a promptitude of classical allusion, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glare of his eyes into futurity, and a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away all before him.

"American independence was then and there

born. The seeds of patriots and heroes to defend the vigorous youth were then and there sown. Every man of that immense crowded audience appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against writs of assistance. Then and there was the first scene of the first act of opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain. Then and there the child Independence was born. In fifteen years—that is, in 1776—he grew up to manhood and declared himself free."

That you will find in Thornton's "Pulpit of the American Revolution," at page 114; and also in the tenth volume of John Adams's works. I think you will agree that James Otis must have been eloquent indeed to inspire an impression so permanent in the mind of the aged John Adams, who in his earlier years had been ordinarily most bitter in his criticism against any one who was or sought to be a rival.

That was one of the great speeches, perhaps one of the two great speeches of the Revolution. The other was that speech of Patrick Henry, which probably has been committed to memory and recited by more schoolboys than any other speech ever delivered in America, and which brought together New England and Virginia in one common admiration for its source. You will remember some of the phases of it:

"It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace; the war has actually begun. The next

gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the crash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field — why stand we here idle? Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!"

One of the men, John Roane, who heard that speech, has recorded it in all its points of eloquence. He has so described it, perhaps with some aid from the imagination, that we almost see as well as hear it in passing.

"When he said," writes Roane, "when he said, 'Is life so dear or peace so sweet' he stood in the attitude of a condemned galley-slave, loaded with fetters, awaiting his doom. His form was bowed, his wrists were crossed, his manacles were almost visible as he stood like an embodiment of helplessness and agony. After a solemn pause he raised his eyes and chained hands toward heaven and prayed in words and tones that thrilled every heart, 'Forbid it, Almighty God!' He then turned toward the timid loyalists of the house, who were quaking with terror at the idea of the consequence of participating in proceedings which would be visited with the penalties of treason by the British crown; and he slowly bent his form yet nearer to the earth and said: 'I know not what course others may take,' and he accompanied the words

with his hands crossed, while he seemed to be weighed down with additional chains. The man appeared to be transformed into an oppressed, heart-broken and helpless felon. After remaining in this posture of humiliation long enough to impress the imagination he arose proudly and exclaimed, 'But as for me,' and the words hissed through his clenched teeth, while his body was thrown back, and every muscle and tendon was strained against the fetters which bound him, and with his countenance strained with agony and rage he looked for a moment like Laocoön in a death struggle with coiling serpents; then with loud clear tones he cried, 'Give me liberty, or give me death!' and electrified the assembly. It was not a prayer, but a stern demand which would submit to no refusal or delay. The sound of his voice, as he spoke these memorable words, was like that of a Spartan pæan on the field of Platæa."

It cannot be said that we do not know something of what the oratory of the Revolution was, after these descriptions. In modern times we should have the address reported; in the hands of a very good reporter we should have interpolated any questions that followed or that interrupted, any applause, any expressions of dissent. But here, not having that, we have a description by a person who saw it and heard it all.

In seeing this transition thus completed from the domain of the clergy to the power of the

lawyers, which certainly if it does not still last, lasted up to the time of the anti-slavery movement and the great reforms of the last generation, we are led to ask, was it on the whole a loss or a gain? I do not see how we can doubt it was a gain; at least that it came nearer to a perfectly truthful and solid basis.

This was never perhaps stated so well as when, in answer to a certain point raised by Mr. Master Jewett of Balliol College—addressed officially as “Mr. Master,” as we say “Mr. President”—he was discussing with another clergyman the comparative power of the judge and the bishop. The other clergyman said:

“Of course the bishop’s power is greater. The power of the judge does not go beyond this—that he can say to a sinner, ‘You shall be hanged’; but the bishop can go a step further and say to him, ‘You shall be damned.’”

“Yes,” said Mr. Master Jewett, “but we must remember, after all, that when the judge says to the man, ‘You shall be hanged,’ the man *is* hanged!”

In talking of the lawyers I must not now pass down to the present time, further than this, to speak of two modern lawyers who so greatly commanded the profession by the power of genius, and often, not always, by the power of personal courage and self-devotion, that they may be regarded as the outcome or remote devel-

opment of that second stage of American history which I have tried to portray.

It happened to me, when I was in college, to be once on some business at an office on State street in Boston, then as now the central business street of the place, in a second-story office where there were a number of young men writing busily at their desks. Presently one of the youths, passing by accident across the room, stopped suddenly and said:

“There is Daniel Webster!”

In an instant every desk in that room was vacated, every pane in every window was filled with a face looking out, and I, hastening up behind them, found it difficult to get a view of the street so densely had they crowded round it. And once looking out I saw all up and down the street, in every window I could see, just the same mass of eager faces behind the windows. Those faces were all concentrated on a certain figure, a farmer-like, sunburned man who stood, roughly clothed, with his hands behind him, speaking to no one, looking nowhere in particular; waiting, so far as I could see, for nothing, with broad shoulders and heavy muscles, and the head of a hero above. Such a brow, such massive formation, such magnificent black eyes, such straight black eyebrows I had never seen before.

That man, it appeared, was Daniel Webster! I saw people go along the street sidling along

past him, looking up at him as if he were the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World in New York harbor. Nobody knew what he wanted, it never was explained; he may have been merely waiting for some companion to go fishing. But there he was, there he stands in my memory. I don't know what happened afterwards, or how those young men ever got back to their desks—if they ever did.

For me, however, that figure was revealed by one brief duplicate impression, which came in a few months afterwards when I happened to be out in Brookline, a suburb of Boston, where people used to drive then, as they drive now, on summer afternoons for afternoon tea—only, afternoon tea not having been invented, they drove out to their neighbors' houses for fruit or a cup of chocolate.

You have heard Boston perhaps called the "Hub of the universe." A lady, not a Bostonian, once said that if Boston were the hub of the universe, Brookline ought to be called the "Sub-hub." In the "sub-hub" I was sitting in the house of a kinsman who had a beautiful garden; who was the discoverer, in fact, of the Boston nectarine which all the world came to his house to taste. I heard voices in the drawing-room and went in there. And there I saw again before me the figure of that day on State street, but it was the figure of a man with a beamingly good-natured face, seated in a solid

chair brought purposely to accommodate his weight, sitting there with the simple culinary provision of a cup of chocolate in his hand.

It so happened that the great man, the god-like Daniel, as the people used to call him, had expressed the very mortal wish for a little more sugar in his chocolate; and I, if you please, was the fortunate youth who, passing near him, was selected as the Ganymede to bring to him the refreshment desired. I have felt ever since that I, at least, was privileged to put one drop of sweetness into the life of that great man, a life very varied and sometimes needing refreshment. And I have since been given by my classmates to understand—I find they recall it to this day—that upon walking through the college yard for a week or two after that opportunity, I carried my head so much higher than usual as to awaken an amount of derision which undoubtedly, if it had been at West Point, would have led to a boxing match.

That was Daniel Webster, one of the two great lawyers of Boston—I might almost say—I might quite say—of the American bar at that time. If I have spoken too largely in proportion of those from my own part of the country, you must remember that I am speaking now of the earlier days; and when I come, in my next address, to speak of the reformers, I shall necessarily cover a wider field. But I must mention one other who for his effect, at least, and for something in

his genius may be classed with Webster. With less solidity of power he had, on the other hand, a more consistent brilliancy.

We have at the Court of St. James a gentleman known to you all, under the name of Choate, whom you might recognize less easily if you heard him mentioned, as he often is, by admiring Englishmen, as "Mr. Cho-a-té." "Mr. Cho-a-té" is the nephew of the great barrister of his age, Rufus Choate. And it is a singular fact that the whole physique, the whole aspect of that great lawyer was so un-Saxon, so distinctly suggestive of southern Europe that the Italianized pronunciation of his name hardly seems inappropriate.

He and Lord Tennyson are the only two men I have seen, of English blood who were absolutely un-English in looks. Any one who has seen Lord Tennyson knows that in him you beheld something remote from the neat, well-tailored, well-trimmed, well-valeted bearing of the average educated Englishman. You saw a tall lank figure with very dark complexion, long features, tangled black hair, tangled mustache and beard; in all respects suggesting rather some imperfectly tamed Sicilian bandit or some partially converted Carthusian monk, than a substantial Englishman and a man of property. Somewhat the same it was with Rufus Choate.

He had the darkness, the tangled hair, eyes of unfathomable depth and sadness, and instead

of the tangled beard and mustache he had a long, anxious face, as if the woes of a hundred clients were represented there. And the curious thing about it, in addition, is that here was a man born of the unmixed blood of Massachusetts peasants, so far as they were peasants—nay rather, common people, common farmers in Essex County where his kindred still remain, a race of simple ways. And yet from among them there had come this beautiful, picturesque youth and this impressive, fascinating personality. And another strange thing which went with that was, that with all this romantic and ideal side to him, he could yet wind the juries of Essex County round his fingers while he was lavishing all his wealth of phraseology upon their heads.

Here was a man who, on one occasion while defending a sea captain on the charge of starving his crew, would bring in the books kept by the man and read aloud in his deep, solemn tones the number of barrels of beans, the number of pounds of pork or of herrings, and coming to the climax at last pin his dark eyes upon the jury and say,

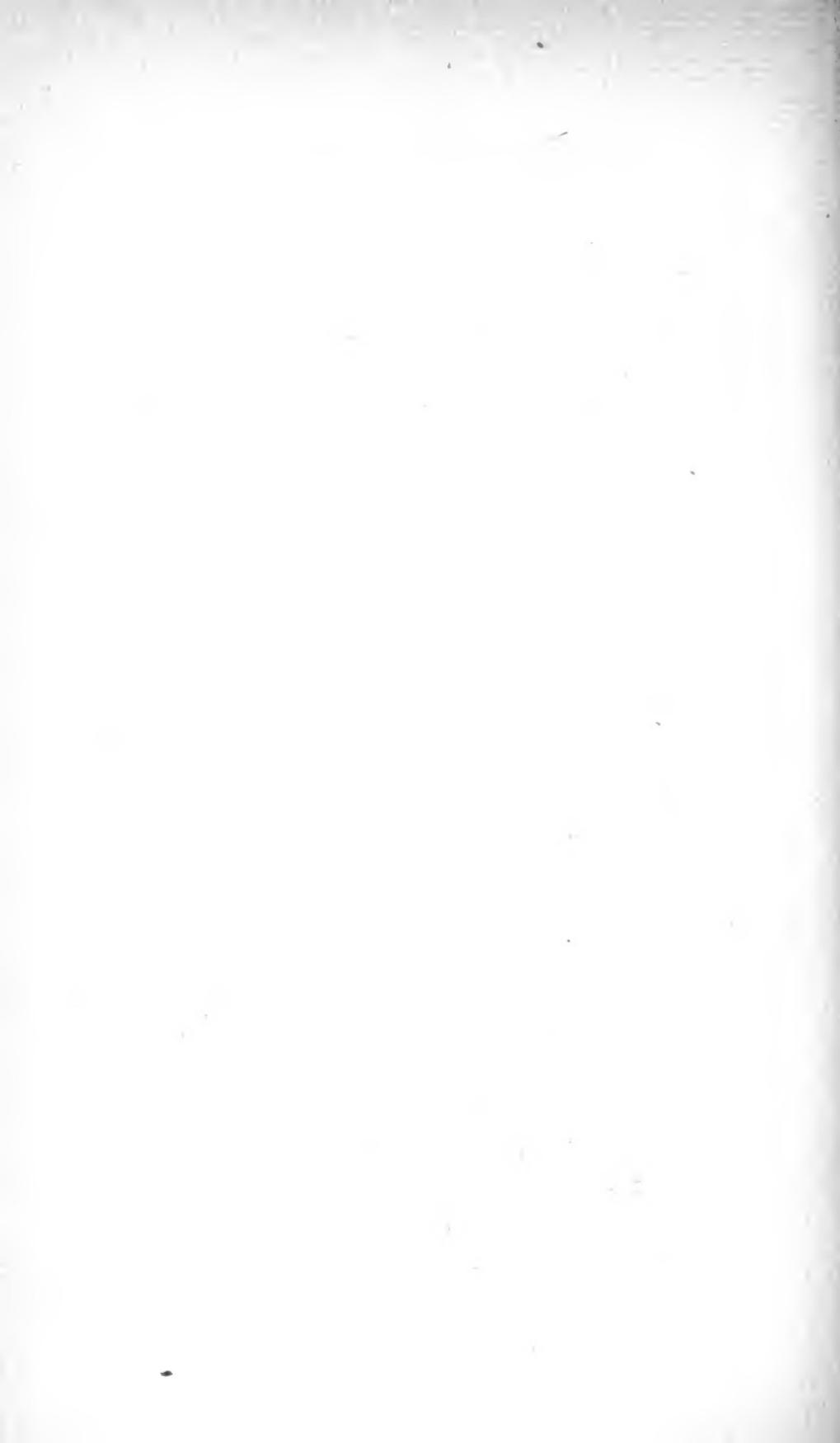
“And, gentlemen of the jury, he fed that ungrateful crew upon that luxurious esculent of the tropics—squash!” And not a man would smile, and every man would look at his fellow-jurymen as if now they had got to the depth of a murder trial.

In those days they used to publish in the

*Boston Post*, which was the funny paper of Boston then — they had a funny paper then — and it used to put in two columns, "Poetry by Mr. Choate," "Prose by the Witness." For instance the famous Tirrell murder trial. There would be first this passage:

"Poetry, by Mr. Choate: Down to that fatal Monday evening, gentlemen of the jury, when the client's last lingering hope flickered like a candle and went out."

And then you would look in the next column and you would see the prose by the witness: "Wal, all I know is that I come into the room, and there the first thing I sot eyes on was Al. Tirrell a-sitting in his chair, and he was cocked up ag'in the corner and he was crying. And says I, 'What's the matter, Al.?' And says he, 'I'm afraid I've run ag'in a snag.'" That was the "Prose by the Witness." And Mr. Choate generally carried the day, whether by the sorrow and tears of Tirrell in the one case, or by the provision of the luxuriant esculent of the tropics in the other. (Applause.)



**ANTI-SLAVERY AND  
LYCEUM ORATORY.**



## Anti-Slavery and Lyceum Oratory.



HAVE spoken, in the two previous lectures, of two very marked periods in the development of American oratory, and have tried to make it clear from what sources the modification came. The first of my lectures, you will remember, bore reference to the Colonial period, or what I called "The Reign of the Clergy," when all public speaking, like all else, was under the controlling influence of a strange ecclesiastical tradition. I then explained to you how, with the approach of the American Revolution, there came from various sources a transfer of this leadership, which took the form of what I ventured to call "The Rise of the Lawyers."

And I pointed out to you toward the close of the last lecture that, while great gain ensued in some respects from this transformation, it was not exclusively an advantage; that the habits of speech at that period were florid, overloaded with words, not simple and direct, were strongly, for instance, under the control of writers like Dr.

Johnson in literature, and under a similar control in what related to oratory. So that, after all, there was substituted a somewhat artificial style. And when, coming down later than the period I actually designated, I portrayed one or two ripened specimens of that tendency toward the reign of the lawyers and described two of the greatest among them at that period—Webster and Choate—I recognized in both of those, that there was to some extent an overladen style in the one and in the other a style often heavy, though rising at its highest points to extraordinary power.

We are now to contemplate a period when, from obvious influences, there came a modification of this more ornate style; a more direct, more simple and consequently more powerful form of oratory. This was the result of the necessity of dealing with great public questions and with great moral reforms. The floridity of style at that period is described in a phrase from a book celebrated in its day, published in the year 1828, and described by the first of English essayists at that period, Hazlitt, as being the most important book yet produced in America; a book containing the travels and observations of President Dwight of Yale College going through the New England states and, to some extent, the beginnings of the Western States, and stating what he found there, frankly and freely—with that frankness and freedom which college presi-

dents commonly showed, in those days at least, in dealing with other people.

He speaks of hearing one or two addresses in Boston, and speaks of them as being given in what is called "the Boston style—a florid style," thus putting it on record, and I think with entire truth, that that style prevailed at that period. If, for instance, you should read—if anybody could do it in full—the lectures upon "Rhetoric and Oratory" given by John Quincy Adams at Harvard University at that time, you would be astonished at the immense length of those lectures—two stout volumes, a record of repetition, of verbiage, surprising you by the number of words that it takes him to say a simple thing.

Now the great step, after all, toward making oratory human is tested, in a degree, by the shortness of the words. As long as words are polysyllabic and multitudinous you may reach a special class, but you don't reach the human heart.

I remember, myself, one commencement day, after the Civil War, when a once eminent literary man in Boston, George S. Hilliard, one of the most brilliant of the elder type of men, who had been rather out of sympathy with the college during the war-time, came back at last and made an address at the commencement dinner. Dr. Edward Hammond Clarke, of Boston, a classmate of mine, sat beside me as he heard this address, and he turned to me at the end and said:

"It is a very strange thing. I can remember the time when that address would have seemed to me the height of eloquence, and yet now it makes no impression upon me at all." I said to him,

"That is just the feeling that has been in my mind."

When afterwards Dr. Clarke himself was called upon, a man not then habitually a public speaker, he simply began and went through a perfectly straightforward, up-and-down description of the present condition and prospects of the medical school of the university, and swept all hearers with sympathy. Everybody listened to him, everybody delighted in the statement he made.

The period of the shortening of words and the directness of address had come. It had always come when the learned man of that day was face to face with the plain man, who spoke simply the words that he meant and said the thing in the shortest way.

There used to be a story in my college, in my childhood, of the first mayor of Cambridge. I notice that cities are very apt to take for their first mayor a learned man, a college-bred man at any rate. Sometimes experience brings them nearer to a man of the people, at the end, than the old-fashioned college man was.

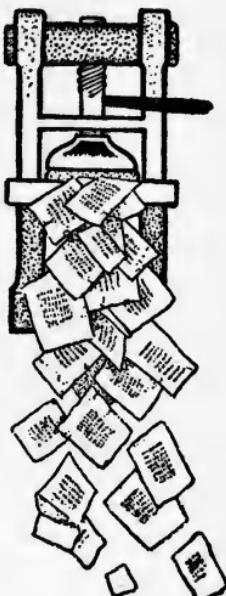
Our first mayor was a college man. He did his duties faithfully and was a man of great dignity.

There came one night an alarm of fire just as he was going to bed. The old gentleman felt that his duty was there. He got up, put on his fur coat and his fur cap, took his gold-headed cane in his hand and walked manfully in the direction of the fire. As he came near he found a great tumult going on, people running about the street, and at last a man came running past him with a pair of old-fashioned fire-buckets in his hands. Mayor Green stopped and planted his gold-headed cane in the street and said:

"Can you tell me, my friend, the probable origin of this alarming conflagration?"

"Sot, I guess!" said the man, and ran on with his fire-buckets.

There you have the condensation, and there you have the extreme. And when you got some of that monosyllabic quality into public speaking, you came in contact with real things, and handled them in a real manner. The monosyllabic period did not come from any book, into New England, into the United States. It did not come from any preconceived theory of method. It came, one may say, when a hitherto unknown young man took his old-fashioned printing-press and moved it up from Newburyport to Boston, started the anti-slavery movement, and began a newspaper called *The Boston Liberator*. It was done so obscurely that when



he got into trouble with the genteel part of the population, and the mayor went to hunt up the printing-office he found it difficult to discover it. It was in an obscure part of the city. The young man was still obscurer, but he was definitely a man with a purpose. He brought that purpose with him; he brought his cause with him. People gathered around him instinctively. He was trained on the Bible; he was full of Bible texts to the end of his life. He became very heretical in his views of the Bible, but the more heretical he was, the more he quoted it. And always, from beginning to end, he said what he wanted to say very plainly.

I spoke of Dr. Johnson just now. There is a fact which illustrates very well that when the great Dr. Johnson got to his highest point and did his best work he adopted quite a different style. Some of you have encountered his high-water mark in the books of extracts, the time when he, having been finally flattered and approached by the Earl of Chesterfield who had snubbed and repelled him when he was an unknown youth, when he wrote his answer to this gentleman's offer of assistance and he says to him, in the latter part of his brief letter:

"The notice that you have been pleased to take of my humble labors, had it been early, would have been kind. As it is, it has been delayed until I am old and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known and do not want it."

That letter has always been celebrated for the concentration, in a series of vigorous words, of the life and emotion of a strong man, who in the less serious affairs of life had dealt in polysyllables.

And it is a curious fact that when you read about Garrison's early history — he had never perhaps erred in the other direction — we find him always setting forth on that plane of perfectly direct statement which he always followed. When he went, at the beginning of his movement, to consult with old Dr. Beecher, and Dr. Beecher declined to take up the anti-slavery enterprise, because, he said, he had already too many irons in the fire, "Then, Dr. Beecher," said Garrison, "the best advice I can give you is to take all the others out and put this one in."

There you have the monosyllables again. In the same way, when he was called to account by the mayor, mobbed in the streets, he still held to the same simple forms of statement, still declined to make the slightest compromise, still said his words in the plainest way. Following him, the men who came forward — and women — on the platform, all from the very first struck a point of contact with the plain people — that very phrase came from Charles Sumner himself, perhaps the most learned among them all — "the plain people" — and hence the plain people followed them. Garrison had said:

"I am in earnest; I will not equivocate; I will

not retract a single inch; I will be heard." And he was heard.

It happened very frequently, by one of those things which we call fortunate, or providential, according to our habits, that he reached and called to him the man who, of all the young men of Boston, was the most favored, the most intellectually gifted, the most assisted by circumstances in obtaining prestige.

When some celebrated Englishman was in Boston, and was at the office of Mr. Ticknor — the study of Mr. Ticknor, which looked on Park street in Boston, looked across on the Common — he was complaining, with the frankness of Englishmen, of the absence of a controlling look of gentlemanliness about Americans. He said he had scarcely seen a man in America who looked to him like a gentleman. And it was perfectly true at that time, and is to-day, that the average American is not groomed quite so well, he is not so suggestive of the valet in the brushing of his coat and the set of his hat as the average Englishman. At any rate, this man thought so, and he said, as he walked up and down the room talking about it:

"Stop! Who are those walking up and down the street on the other side? They are the only two men I have seen in your country who had the look of gentlemen!" Mr. Ticknor went to the window and smiled and said,

"You will hardly believe it, but those two

men are two of our most extreme radicals — they are Wendell Phillips and Edmund Quincy."

"What do I care," said the Englishman, "whether they are radicals or not? I don't know what you call radicalism here. What I said was that they were the only two that looked like gentlemen." And both those typical gentlemen were the first who rallied around the plain, strong printer's boy from Newburyport, who did not know or care whether he looked like a gentleman or not. He looked like a man — that was enough.

My elder brother, who was in college with Wendell Phillips, used to say that of all the Harvard students of his time there was but one for whom the family carriage was sent out from Boston every Saturday to take him home to stay over Sunday. That one was Wendell Phillips, and he therefore brought this tradition of culture — what was called culture then, this tradition of social polish, to strengthen the tradition and the habit of Garrison's monosyllables on the other side. And from the time he first found himself at Faneuil Hall and made, in answer to the district attorney's pro-slavery defense of the Alton mob, his appeal to the pictured ancestors on the walls, he stood, as he stands to this day, the recognized superior — I will not say of all American orators, though perhaps I might say it, but certainly of all New England orators.

Wendell Phillips's manner brought with it

that air of comparative repose which characterizes the speaking of today—the directness and simplicity. Indeed it was almost an extreme. He began his addresses so quietly that it always bewildered the Southern visitors, who frequently came into the anti-slavery meetings and sometimes spoke there, in a very manly and direct way.

They would say, "This quiet person, is he the famous agitator?" And we on the platform sometimes found his beginnings a little too quiet. The remedy was to send two or three young fellows up into the gallery to hiss a little—and then the tide came in. He rose invariably with the occasion. He could not be said to love public speaking; he always said that he did not desire it at all, that he would rather never make another speech.

I think he had enough in him of the old tradition that he would have liked better the recognized ways. He always said he should like to be in the United States Senate. In theory he didn't enjoy mob oratory—it was when the fight came on that he enjoyed it. More than once I have gone to meetings with him, and he has said, "Why do these people all come out to the meetings? There, for instance, is a man and wife; two comfortable, respectable looking people. They have a pleasant home, a pleasant family fire, occupations of their own. Why do they leave it to come out to hear anybody lecture?"

He always appreciated the position of those who didn't go to his lectures, and was rather sorry for those who did. And yet public speaking became to him more than to anybody else, perhaps, the absorbing pursuit of life. He himself had, in the ordinary sense of the word, no comfortable home. His wife was a confirmed invalid, always giving fire to his thought and energy, but always an invalid. There was no home room. The parlor was forlorn, the dining-room was forlorn; it was a sea of newspapers. It was in his wife's sick-room, where strangers were rarely admitted, that you saw Wendell Phillips at home. And it was the concentration of a life.

Nothing can be more unreasonable than my friend Professor Wendell's statement in his recent very valuable book upon the "History of American Literature" that Garrison, for instance, and Parker were coarse and vehement of speech because they were born plebeians, they were men of the people. Their worst efforts in the form of vehemence of speech could not be compared to what the scions of the first families of Boston were ready at any time to say and do to them.

Phillips himself was capable of extreme plainness and even injustice of speech. The anti-slavery movement could not, in its nature, be a school for carefully weighing words; but it could be a school for the superb use of them. The power of directness never was more highly culti-

vated. There never in this world was a more absolutely unselfish gathering of men and women than there was there. Even the other reforms came nearer to the basis of selfishness, because they came nearer to the homes of the people who promoted them; but this movement was to save the homes and lives of people at a distance, of a different color, of a different race. It was the most unselfish movement in the history of the country, at least the most unselfish I ever knew of or had to do with.

One incidental advantage of this was that it always had surroundings even on the platform, that went far beyond those of any other movement; it was always the most picturesque of platforms.

It had not only these persons of strong natural command in their aspect, like Garrison, or of traditional refinement like Phillips and Quincy; but it had, of course, also its fringe of picturesque and generally amiable fanatics; those "men with beards," whom Emerson describes as characteristic of the early reform meetings in Boston, at a time when merely to have a beard was to step outside of the proprieties of life and make one marked.

The chief type of these was Charles Burleigh, whom some of you remember, who for the simple offense of letting his beard and hair grow as nature made them, was often charged in the newspapers with the blasphemous effort to resem-

ble the pictures of Jesus Christ, which he undoubtedly did.

And when James Russell Lowell in his earlier enthusiasm took up the anti-slavery reform and used to go about with Burleigh, he too let his beard grow, then a very rare phenomenon, and it used to amuse him very much at the way people would look at Burleigh and point out Lowell, the young neophyte, trying to look as blasphemous as Burleigh did by letting his beard grow!

Then there was old Father Lamson, always dressed in white and always ready to protest against the sins of the world. Then Abby Folsom, whose shrill voice mounted high at any suggestion of hissing or dissent, "It is the capitalists!" long before real capitalists on the modern scale had begun to exist in America.

Then there were old Quakers, venerable men who simply gave their looks and their silence to the meetings. And then, most perceptible of all, was the perpetual circle of newly arrived fugitive slaves who had just been landed on the wharves of Boston and unpacked from boxes or barrels where they had been stood on their heads perhaps for hours on the way; or women like Harriet Tubman who, after making her own escape had gone back seven times into slavery to bring out parties of fugitives with her; or women like Elizabeth Blakely, who had crowded herself up into a narrow passage between the

wall of the ladies' cabin and the side of the ship, a passage so narrow that she was hidden and they could not find her, though they knew she was on board and they had fumigated the whole ship twice with sulphur to drive her out; but she still stayed on and came out alive in Boston. It was all picturesque life, novel life, real life, new incidents.

And then there would perhaps come some man stumbling in his heavy slavery gait upon the platform, walking as if a hundred pounds of Virginia mud or South Carolina chains were appended to each heel; and that man would afterwards, under the influence of freedom, develop into the superb stature and the distinguished bearing of Frederick Douglass.

Those were the incidents of the platform. A deaf man might have gone into an anti-slavery meeting and been thrilled from beginning to end, without hearing a word that was said.

And in the midst of this, Wendell Phillips with his natural gifts, took the leadership. There were, of course, times when it was comparatively easy sailing, when he had his statement to make and no immediate contest; and then there would be other times when there would be a direct almost hand-to-hand, at least voice-to-voice contest with some mob of assailants.

I remember one of these, for instance, in Faneuil Hall when the Abolitionists had been shut out there for a long time.

It was after Webster's seventh of March speech and Webster also, by creating antagonism, had been shut out for a time. The Abolitionists got in first and then the young enthusiasts for Webster, mostly young lawyers and business men, came by hundreds and made a mob, a solid body in the middle of Faneuil Hall determined absolutely to silence Wendell Phillips.

Practically they did silence him for a time, because the moment he began to speak the shout would be given, "Three cheers for Daniel Webster!" and the cheers would ring and ring. Finally they would die away, and then Phillips would hasten to begin again, and the cheers would begin again. This happened again and again some three or four times, absolutely silencing Phillips. Phillips then chose his method of defense. He foresaw that in a little while even the luxury of cheering would become monotonous, the cheerers would get a little out of breath. So when the intervals began to become a little longer after the cheering Phillips, suddenly struck in with a wholly unexpected appeal, and himself called for cheers for Daniel Webster.

"Yes," he said, "three cheers for Daniel Webster, for the man who said so-and-so, and then went and did so-and-so!"

And he had got in four or five good points of his argument before they knew where they were and began to cheer again. Then would come another lull, with some curiosity to know

what he would say next. He was waiting patiently.

"Yes," he would cry, "three cheers for Daniel Webster, who on such and such a day committed himself to so-and-so, and then afterwards said so-and-so!"

He would be interrupted, but each time his chance would become greater, and he would say: "Oh, I love to repeat the Book of Daniel! Three cheers for the man who did this or that!"

And by degrees he had so tired out that mob of howling but inexperienced youth that their cheers gradually died down, and Phillips had begun to call for three cheers for Charles Sumner and half the audience were joining in those cheers. Never did I see such a personal triumph of one man over many. And the whole conception of it, the strategy of it, the individuality of it belonged to Wendell Phillips alone.

Then while combining this power of contest he also had a power of what would more commonly be recognized as oratory. If you read his two volumes of orations you will find in them here and there passages of the superbest continuity, of an ocean-like grace and dignity.

There is one passage there which I once could repeat verbatim, but cannot now—one passage there comparing slavery and war and showing slavery to be the worst evil, the more crushing peril of the two. It swells like ocean's surges, and finally, enumerating point by point he comes

to the conclusion, taking into consideration very fully the evils on both sides, he comes to this superb climax:

"Where is the battle-field that is not white—white as an angel's wing compared with the blackness of that darkness that has brooded over the Carolinas for centuries?"

I have good reason to remember that passage. I used to say it in anti-slavery speeches in small country towns, and I remember on one occasion where I was thrilling my audience, or at least myself, and I rose to that point in the conclusion that I said:

"Where is the battle-field that is not white, white as the raven's wing?"

And I have no memory of an audience more curious than the bewildered way in which, in that small country church somewhere in central New York, I could watch the different faces as I made some feeble apology that it was inevitable that slavery should mix black and white, or something like that; I could watch the difference between the young and ardent who grasped at the blunder in a minute and enjoyed it thoroughly, and their more meditative parents, who after tackling with it a while understood it by degrees; and the respectable citizens in the side aisles who didn't fairly comprehend that anything was gone wrong and probably never have fathomed it.

And, you are to remember that on this anti-slavery platform there was a race of men and

women who had been trained by the movement itself, who had brought their various gifts to it and who, while retaining the greatest individuality and speaking for themselves, still had different points of view to contribute.

Phillips sometimes though rarely, tried to modify a little the statements of the more extravagant — as where, for instance, Charles Lenox Remond of Salem, a colored man of great ability, and who it seemed to me as a free colored man was bitterer about slavery than the men who had achieved their own freedom. When Charles Remond used the expression often quoted that "George Washington was a villain,"

"Charles," said Wendell Phillips, "the epithet is not felicitous" — which I always thought one of the most delicate repressions ever applied to an over-zealous apostle.

Then there would be that fine type of the yeoman reformer, Stephen Foster of Worcester, a man who had the arms, the big hands, and the sunburned face of the thorough farmer that he was; who had taken the stoniest farm in the neighborhood of Worcester, Massachusetts, and made it into the best by the labor of those same hands and arms; and who, when I once said to him, "I should think you would like better to farm it at the west, where you would have a better soil to deal with," replied, "I should hate to farm it at the west. I don't wish to put my spade into the ground where it doesn't strike a

rock." There was the abolitionist turned farmer, or the farmer turned abolitionist.

I remember the time when one of those southern speakers who, as I have said, came into the meetings in a manly way and spoke their minds sometimes—I remember when Foster had been rather too hard upon this man, as I thought pressed him rather too closely. The young fellow turned to him with his southern feeling and said:

"Do you mean to say that I lie?"

"Don't know anything about that," said Stephen Foster, going steadily on with his plow-share no matter whom he hit—"I don't know anything about whether you'd lie or not. *I know you steal,*" assuming as the foundation for his statement the principle that no man could ever have ownership in men.

I thought then, and I think now, that the abolitionists were not always just in their impeachments. I don't think that Garrison himself was. What I mean is, they stated their principles broadly and truly and they applied them to slaveholders as a class with a certain justice, but what they did not realize was the terrific complications which slavery had brought with it, and the multitude of cases in which there were slaveholders as absolutely powerless to free their slaves as they would be to swim across the Atlantic—slaveholders impoverished by their parents, not able to guide their slaves into the land of freedom, and living in states where the

laws were so fiendishly strict that a man absolutely could not free his slaves even if he took them out of the state.

There were three or four of the slave states where, to make emancipation personally impossible, it was the law that any slave set free by his master should be arrested by the authorities and sold to the highest bidder at auction. What could a slaveholder do under circumstances like that?

So far as the training of oratory is concerned, which is the point now at stake, I have never seen a school which seemed to me equal to this anti-slavery movement. And there grew out of this special reform, or joined it, other reforms none of them quite so radical in the antagonism they produced, but of immense importance—the temperance movement, the woman suffrage movement, and then, in general, the lyceum movement, the creation of a system of lyceum lectures throughout the country.

Some of you will remember that extraordinary man, unique among speakers, who first created the great temperance movement and then led the lyceum movement, a man whose name is already being forgotten like the names of all orators. All orators are forgotten. As Rufus Choate said, a book is the only immortality—and even books die young very often. I refer to John B. Gough.

John B. Gough was a man born for the stage,

trained upon the stage, and carrying upon the platform in his temperance lectures the united ability of amusement and entertainment of any half-dozen troops of comedians who throng the stages of your theaters. He filled the stage himself. He never was still a moment. He was constantly running from one end of the stage to the other, and gesticulating, from his head to his feet—even with his knees and his elbows—he might be called the Cissy Loftus of the temperance stage.

So great was his power that when he turned his attention to lyceum oratory, he earned an income of thirty thousand dollars a year, simply by his outside lectures.

He lectured every day in the year, often two or three times in the day. And all that he earned he gave away in some form or other. He not only thought, as some men of this generation, that our rich men ought not to die rich, but he thought they ought not to live rich.

Once when planning for a new regiment in the Civil War, I went to him and implored him to become ordained and go down as chaplain of the regiment, he told me just how he was situated and he gave me a long list of young men who had entered college with the understanding that he was to pay their way through, and their way was to be paid by his gains still to be made by lecturing. He was so entangled by his own good deeds that he could not do what perhaps

might have been a better deed than any of them.

Besides him came into the lyceum movement the extraordinary power of Henry Ward Beecher. I never was so disappointed as when I heard Henry Ward Beecher for the first time, when he came from Indianapolis. Three-fourths of what he said was read from a manuscript; but suddenly an inspiration would come and he would be before the audience, originating all sorts of wild thoughts and expressing them with that immense originality in which no one on the platform ever equalled him.

Then he would go on and read his notes again, becoming only gradually emancipated from them. Afterwards his extraordinary power was developed, as you know, never entirely free from coarseness, never quite to be trusted in the things he might say or the illustrations he might use, but still unique—as unique as Phillips in his own way.

Then there was that other high-bred and model gentleman of the period, George William Curtis, a man born for a poet and made by conscience a reformer, a man whose very bearing carried such high breeding and whose voice such exquisite music that it made little difference what he said.

When Curtis was sent as a member of the New York constitutional convention he happened to be one day in the ante-room writing a letter, when two of his fellow-members came in and sat

down and began the favorite subject of gossiping about one another. They went over the different members and handled them as men do under the same circumstances—possibly even women may have similar interests. Curtis watched them with pleased amusement, and when at last he saw that they were getting round to him there was no chance of retreat; he had to hold his ground. And one of them said:

“Now, there’s Curtis.”

“Yes,” said the other, “there’s Curtis,” in rather a disparaging way. Said the first one,

“Curtis is what you may call an intelligent man.”

“Yes,” said the other, “an intelligent man.” Said the first one, rather roused,

“Curtis is a *very* intelligent man.”

“Well,” said the other, “I don’t know but what you *might* call Curtis a very intelligent man—for a literary man.”

Both upon the anti-slavery platform and elsewhere, the quality of leadership began to be shown by women. Lucretia Mott, always strong, motherly, sensible—I remember once when Mr. Barnum, not the most refined of men, the celebrated showman, a man of great ability, had been making a speech and Mrs. Mott was called after him.

There could hardly be a greater contrast than between her Quaker garb and her motherly, wise appearance and his. And she said she had

heard with great interest what Mr. Barnum had been saying, and thought he had been uttering some very excellent opinions, although, she said, "some of his anecdotes were a little too gross for ears polite." I never saw a man—who was holding the world of money-making in his hands at that moment—more conclusively sat upon, as the rising generation say, than Mr. P. T. Barnum was at that moment.

I remember Anna Dickinson with her fire, her enthusiasm, and her curious way of carrying the elegancies of life upon the platform and trailing silks and velvets on the often bare boards. She had a tinge of the actress in her blood also, which led her at last upon the stage.

And then, above all, that woman of the sweetest voice and the sweetest of manners, Lucy Stone. I never shall forget how, when Lucy Stone had spoken once at Brattleboro, Vermont, where my sisters were then living, one of my sisters writing me an account of the meeting—she being utterly opposed to the whole movement—burst out in indignation, not that Lucy Stone should be so objectionable but that being a reformer she should be so lovely.

She said, "What business had that sweet creature, with her winning voice, she whose very look suggests a home and a husband and a baby—what business had she amidst that crowd?"

And later in life I remember when once I took one of the most gifted of American women, the

late Mrs. Helen Jackson — Helen Hunt she was first, the author of "Ramona" — when I took her, by my own request, to a woman suffrage meeting in New York where Lucy Stone was to speak, she said to me:

"I don't think you will wish to take me when I tell you I am going on purpose to make fun of the whole thing in the *New York Tribune*." I said,

"Oh, yes, that makes no difference; I will take the chance of that. Come along." We went together and sat together. As we came out after Lucy had made one of her sweetest appeals we walked out, I remember, into the dark and stormy night, and Mrs. Jackson took my arm to walk along under my umbrella; she was very silent, she said nothing about it. And I said to her:

"Well, have you your notes ready for your *Tribune* article?" She pressed my arm and said,

"Do you suppose that I could ever write a word against anything that a woman with a voice like that wants to have done?" And she did not.

I spoke once before, but not so fully as I wished, of the man who on the anti-slavery platform, from his combination of the two races, was most interesting and most commanding for a time, though not always — for he differed from the others in detail and was more of a voting abolitionist than they were — Frederick Douglass.

In later years I walked once with Frederick

Douglass through the streets of Worcester. It was the middle of winter and he wore a leopard-skin coat and cap. I well remember looking at him as he towered above my head and saying to myself:

"Make the most of this opportunity. You never before have walked the streets with so distinguished-looking a man, and you never will again." And I never have.

This man whom I had seen rise out of this clumsy lingering of the slavery manner, shot up into a superb man. This man, who learned originally to write from the placards in the Baltimore streets after he was eighteen, and by paying a little boy with an apple to tell him what certain letters were — this man gained such a command of speech and language that Mr. Yerrington, then the leading reporter of Boston, who always reported the anti-slavery meetings, told me that of all the speakers in those meetings, there were but two who could be reported without verbal alteration precisely as they spoke, and those two were Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass — the representative of the patrician training on the one side, and the representative of the Maryland slave on the other.

The tact of the man, the address of the man, and the humor of the man made him almost irresistible on the platform. He always had this proud bearing, and yet he was a perfect mimic. He could reproduce anything; he could

meet any occasion. I remember him once at a convention in New York. The meeting had been overpowered by Captain Rynders, who was then the head of the swell mob in New York. He had taken possession of the meeting, had placed himself in the chair and graciously allowed the meeting to go on under his presidency. He had tried in vain to stop Douglass and check him, and had fallen back upon brutal interruptions, even saying, for instance, "Oh, you want to cut all our throats!"

"Oh, no," said the superb Douglass, bending down graciously over him and waving his hand a little over Rynders's tangled and soiled headdress, "Oh, no, we will not cut your throats; we will only cut your hair." And the supporters of Rynders felt the situation as much as anybody. I speak of Douglass the more because he has as yet left no rival of his type. Even Booker Washington, with all his remarkable qualities and undoubtedly an organizing power which Douglass had not, and perhaps destined in the end to be a more visibly useful man, has not that supreme power over an audience which Douglass had.

The man who, in physique, among the anti-slavery speakers was most like Douglass was wholly without his humor. Charles Sumner was overpowering in gravity and earnestness, but he could only speak right on, although that he did superbly. I never shall forget the impression

he made when he first came forward, as a young man after his return from Europe, to preach reform among the Harvard graduates and to talk on the true grandeur of nations.

There was Sumner, a man tall and stately like Douglass but dressed, I remember, in the swell costume of that period—a blue dress-coat with bright buttons, a white waistcoat, drab trousers. And I remember that an enthusiastic admirer of his in Boston, in allusion to that speech and to the opposition he had first received from the college, said:

“There was that man Sumner, speaking with a soul as white as his waistcoat; and those clergymen trying to put him down, with their hearts as black as their coats.” Sumner kept up the standard of knowledge, the standard of high training beyond any of the anti-slavery speakers; but he had not their adaptation, he had not their grace.

I am perhaps lingering too long, over these personal reminiscences. I am sometimes pained at the discovery that the standard of virtue and vice varies with advancing years, and that what is stigmatized as mere gossip in a young man is recognized as a virtue and even invited as a lecture in a man coming near to his eighties.

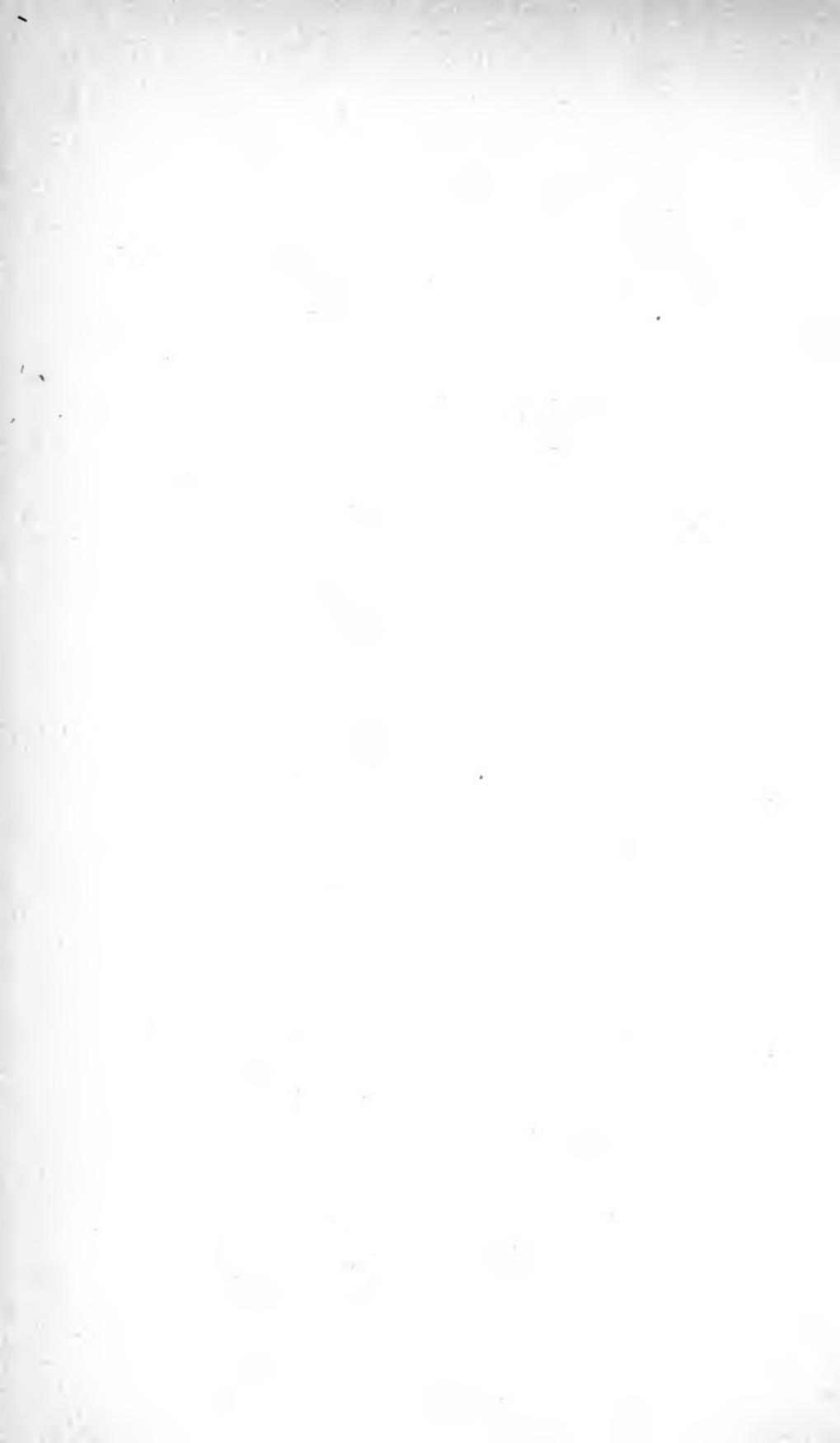
It is demoralizing; if we are all gossips and twaddlers, it is your fault. But nevertheless I know, although I say this, how much it is to those who are just coming forward into a com-

munity so largely composed of great names and memories; it is sometimes a great deal to have, through a personal link, a tie to some other men and women. It is this which has tempted me so far.

I have tried to portray to you the successive stages of American oratory and to bring you to a stage still far from the present, but which is represented even to this day in the habit of directness, of simplicity, of straightforward talk and to some degree, of monosyllables. And when I point you to what I think, even to this day, the two great high-water marks of our public speaking, you will go back with the memory of this progress I have traced, you will go back to Lincoln's Gettysburg address and John Brown's speech in the court-room, and you will find all true of them which I have claimed as part of the progress of American oratory.









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